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**U.S. Department of the Interior**  
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## Great Sand Dunes National Park and Preserve News Release

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### Great Sand Dunes Quarter Event set a new record for visitation!

Mosca, CO – Great Sand Dunes National Park hosted a 30-minute ceremony on Thursday, September 4 in honor of being selected as the national site to represent the state of Colorado on the reverse side of the United States quarter-dollar coin. This free event brought record setting numbers of visitors to the Dunes Lot to witness the official coin pour by Superintendent Lisa Carrico, US Mint representative, David Croft and Deputy Regional Director of the National Park Service, Laura Joss. Park staff report that an estimated 3,000 visitors witnessed this event, with over 2,000 of these visitors coming from local San Luis Valley schools in a total of 48 buses/vans. School students in attendance received a complimentary Great Sand Dunes quarter-dollar, a t-shirt designed by Del Norte student, Eva Thacker, and the opportunity to meet and take a photo with the US Mint mascot, “Buffalo Bill”.

Superintendent Lisa Carrico delivered one of many inspirational speeches to the large crowd that focused on the significance of this honor for Great Sand Dunes and the local community. She addressed over 2,000 local San Luis Valley students, encouraging them to appreciate their national park and strive to protect and enjoy this unique resource. Master of Ceremonies, Fred Bunch, ensured that all involved in the planning and execution of the event were recognized, especially the many teachers and students who came out in support of this historical event. Representatives from Senator Udall’s, Senator Bennett’s, and Congressman Tipton’s offices delivered a special message to the crowd. The beautiful landscape of the dunefield was the perfect backdrop for a musical performance by San Luis Valley singer/songwriter, Don Richomond and San Luis Valley strings quartet, Serenity Strings.

First Southwest Bank was on site to administer the coin exchange immediately following the ceremony. Visitors were lined up before the ceremony to ensure they purchased a supply of the Great Sand Dunes quarter-dollar coin. Visitors who were unable to attend and would like to purchase a supply of the Great Sand Dunes quarter-dollar coin can stop by First Southwest Bank in Alamosa during business hours to inquire about obtaining rolls of the quarter-dollar.

This event was a great success for Great Sand Dunes, as well as for visitors, school groups, and all those involved in the planning and execution of the ceremony. The ceremony was the largest event planned at Great Sand Dunes, which was made possible by the United State Mint, Great Sand Dunes

staff, community volunteers, and the Friends of the Dunes. Great Sand Dunes thanks the community for supporting this event and is honored for being selected to be featured on the quarter-dollar coin. To see images from the event, visit [www.nps.gov/grsa](http://www.nps.gov/grsa) to link to the park's flickr account.

The United States Mint will issue 56 quarter-dollar coins featuring designs depicting national parks and other national sites as part of the America the Beautiful Quarters Program. Five new national site designs, depicted on the reverse (tails), will be released each year in the order in which the honored site was first established as a national site. The 2014 United States Mint America the Beautiful Quarters Program coins will be released in the following order: Great Smoky Mountains National Park, Tennessee, Shenandoah National Park, Virginia, Arches National Park, Utah, Great Sand Dunes National Park, Colorado, Everglades National Park, Florida.

The reverse design of the Great Sand Dunes quarter-dollar features a father and son playing in the sand next to the creek bed. The distinctive mountains and sand dunes are featured in the background. Great Sand Dunes National Park is the 24<sup>th</sup> coin-release in the United States Mint America the Beautiful Quarters<sup>®</sup> Program, a multi-year initiative authorized by Public Law 110-456 (America's Beautiful National Parks Quarter Dollar Coin Act of 2008). To learn more about the America the Beautiful Quarters Program, visit, [www.usmint.gov](http://www.usmint.gov).

*About the National Park Service: The National Park Service will celebrate 100 years of caring for America's 401 national parks in 2016. Our more than 20,000 employees work with communities across the nation to help preserve local history and unique landscapes and create close-to-home recreational opportunities. Learn more at [www.nps.gov](http://www.nps.gov).*

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